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INFORMATION AGENCY

INCOMING  
TELEGRAM

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ACTION OFFICE POM-01  
INFO ACOC-01 CSO-02 OIS-01 PD-02 NEA-01 PG-01 /011 A1 21

R 231137Z FEB 87  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 9979  
INFO RUENOC/ECSTATE WASHDC 3725  
RUSBP/AMCONUSOL PESHAWAR 7887

BT  
CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 04151

USIA

FOR P/DN, INFO NEA, P/G  
STATE FOR NEA/PAB, NEA - PLEASE PASS TO AMB. DUNBAR  
AND AMB. HINTON

E.O. 12556: OROG  
SUBJECT: AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT; NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 3691 (B) USIA 18024

1. BU'S HICK MILLS HAS JUST PROVIDED US WITH A COPY  
OF HIS RECOMMENDATIONS TO JOACHIN MAITRE ABOUT WHERE  
TO GO NEXT ON THE MEDIA PROJECT. THE TEXT OF HIS  
MEMO IS AS FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE. BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS  
IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN I AM RECOMMENDING REJECTION OF  
THE MERCY FUND PROPOSAL. IN MY ESTIMATION THE  
PROPOSAL IS FAR TOO COSTLY AND AMBITIOUS AND I ALSO  
BELIEVE IT WOULD DILUTE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND  
CREDIBILITY OF OUR EFFORT BY COMBINING IT WITH MF'S  
HUMANITARIAN NEWS SERVICE, PUBLISHER OF A SPECIAL  
INTEREST DIRECT-MAIL NEWSLETTER.

I BELIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT  
ARE TO 1) TRAIN QUALIFIED AFGHAN MUJAHEDIN IN BASIC  
MEDIA SKILLS, AND 2) CREATE A MECHANISM FOR  
WIDESPREAD DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION GATHERED BY  
THESE TRAINED PERSONS THROUGH LEGITIMATE NEWS  
CHANNELS. THE FIRST OBJECTIVE IS BEING MET WITH THE  
CURRENT TRAINING OF 34 AFGHANS AND A PLANNED SECOND  
SESSION FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 MORE IN APRIL. THE  
SECOND OBJECTIVE, DISTRIBUTION, CAN BE EFFECTIVELY  
ACHIEVED, IN MY OPINION, BY MEANS OF A SMALL-SCALE,  
INEXPENSIVE EFFORT BASED IN PESHAWAR AND OVERSEEN BY  
THE PROJECT DIRECTOR AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY. FURTHER,  
I BELIEVE THAT THE SCALE OF ORGANIZATION OUTLINED IN  
THE MF PROPOSAL IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE EXISTING OR  
POTENTIAL QUANTITY OF MARKETABLE INFORMATION COMING  
OUT OF AFGHANISTAN.

A QUALIFIED JOURNALIST/ADMINISTRATOR (WESTERN) WITH A  
STAFF OF AFGHAN ASSISTANTS AND REPORTERS/CAMERAMEN  
COULD FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AS A LEGITIMATE NEWS  
ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD SUPPLEMENT THE EFFORTS OF  
EXISTING AFGHAN INFORMATION GROUPS WITHOUT PUTTING  
THEM OUT OF BUSINESS. SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH THEY ARE  
ALL CONCERNED. B.U., THROUGH ITS GRANT, COULD ALSO  
PROVIDE THE OTHER AFGHAN GROUPS WITH HIGH-QUALITY  
CAMERAS TO ASSIST THEIR NEWS GATHERING EFFORTS; THIS  
WOULD BE A MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE GRANT MONEY THAN  
CREATING A LARGE NEW ORGANIZATION.

I RECOMMEND THAT IMMEDIATE STEPS BE TAKEN TO  
IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN, INCLUDING: 1) RECRUITMENT OF  
TRAINEES FOR A SECOND TRAINING SESSION FOR FOUR (4)

WEEKS IN APRIL; 2) RENTAL OF A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY  
IN PESHAWAR WHICH WOULD SERVE AS THE TRAINING AND  
OFFICE SITE; 3) RECRUITMENT OF A QUALIFIED WESTERN  
JOURNALIST/ADMINISTRATOR TO RUN THE OPERATION IN  
PESHAWAR BEGINNING APRIL 1; 4) LEASE OR PURCHASE OF A  
SUITABLE VEHICLE FOR TRAINERS AND ADMINISTRATOR.

DETAILED BUDGET PLANNING WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY WITH  
MY RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE FORWARDED TO B.U. BY MARCH  
1.

I ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE ABOVE MIGHT OVERCOME THE  
PROBLEM OF CREATING AN OFFICIAL A.N.S. WITH A  
GOVERNMENT-APPROVED DIRECTOR. WE HAVE SEEN WHAT A  
TREMENDOUSLY DIFFICULT TASK THIS HAS BECOME,  
POLITICALLY, AND UNDERSTAND THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF  
ITS COMING TO FRUITION IS VERY SLENDER. IF WE CAN  
OPERATE ON AN UNOFFICIAL, LOW-PROFILE LEVEL OUR  
CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE ENHANCED.  
PLEASE NOTE THAT EVEN THIS PLAN DEPENDS ON THE  
SUCCESS OF LOCAL DISCUSSIONS.

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ACTION OFFICE PDH-01  
INFO .ACOC-01 DSO-02 DIS-01 PD-02 HEA-03 PG-01 /011 A1 21

R 231137Z FEB 87  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUENIA/USIA WASHDC 5988  
INFO RUENEC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3727  
RUSBPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 7608  
BT  
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USIA

FOR P/DH, INFO HEA, P/G  
STATE FOR HEA/PAR, HEA - PLEASE PASS TO AMB. DUNBAR  
AND AMB. HINTON

E.O. 12356: OADR  
SUBJECT: AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT: NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 3691 (B) USIA 10024

ALSO, THE APRIL TRAINING DATE IS OPTIMISTIC. WE WANT  
TO MAKE SURE THAT THE NEXT CLASS OF TRAINEES HAS THE  
RIGHT STUFF, AND THE RECRUITING/SCREENING MAY DELAY  
THE START DATE. THERE IS ALSO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION  
BEING GIVEN TO AVOIDING THE MONTH OF RAY FOR TRAINING  
BECAUSE OF CONFLICT WITH RAMAZAN.

PLEASE ADVISE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON HOW YOU WISH TO  
PROCEED. END QUOTE.

3. WE WOULD ADD THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

5. IN THE MEANTIME, WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT MERCY  
FUND IS PUTTING TOGETHER A PROPOSAL (WHICH WE HAVE  
SEEN IN DRAFT) WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED TO USIA AND  
USAID FOR MERCY FUND'S ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR THE MEDIA PROJECT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THEIR  
HUMANITARIAN NEWS SERVICE. WHILE WHAT WE SAW IS ONLY  
A DRAFT, WE NOTE SOME DOWNSIDERS. AMONG THEM: THE  
ASSUMPTION OF USAID FUNDING IN  
ICH SEEMS TO BE  
UNCERTAIN AT BEST; SOME FAIRLY STEEP ADMINISTRATIVE  
COSTS; AND THE FUNDING OF WHAT SEEMS TO US TO BE A  
COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY WASHINGTON OFFICE.

6. BU IS NOW IN ITS FOURTH WEEK OF TRAINING. WITH  
THE PRESENT PROGRAM SCHEDULED TO END IN MID-MARCH.  
AT THAT POINT, HILLS AND KELLY PLAN TO TAKE A MONTH'S  
VACATION, LEAVING O'REILLY ON HAND TO COORDINATE THE  
SELECTION OF THE NEXT GROUP OF TRAINING CANDIDATES.  
WHILE IN THE ABSENCE OF A DECISION ON AN AFGHAN  
DIRECTOR AND NO IMMEDIATE PROMISE THEREOF (SEE REFTEL  
A), WE THINK WE HAVE THE LATITUDE TO GO AHEAD WITH A  
SECOND "INTERIM" TRAINING PROGRAM, UNWANTED PUBLICITY

(SEE REFTEL B) COULD TURN THIS ASSUMPTION ON ITS HEAD  
AND COULD, IN FACT, BLOW THE W  
OLE PROJECT OUT OF THE  
WATER.

7. WE BELIEVE THAT NEITHER BU NOR MERCY FUND, IN ANY  
OF THE DOCUMENTATION WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR, REALLY  
GIVES ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO THE DISTRIBUTION  
MECHANISM FOR WHATEVER MATERIAL IS PRODUCED BY ITS  
TRAINEES -- EITHER AS MEMBERS OF AN INDEPENDENT  
AFGHAN NEWS AGENCY OR AS MEMBERS OF THE STAFFS OF  
EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS. HILLS, IN A COVERING NOTE  
TO ME ON HIS REPORT TO MAITRE, SAYS THAT THE  
MARKETING OF THE SERVICE WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED  
"PRIMARILY BY DIRECT MAIL." THIS WOULD BE LITTLE  
DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS ARE  
PRESENTLY DOING. WHILE LIP SERVICE IS PAID TO IT, WE  
DO NOT BELIEVE THAT EITHER ORGANIZATION -- BU OR  
MERCY FUND -- HAS REALLY INTELLECTUALLY PLUNGED INTO  
THE PROPOSED "SHUTT DISTRIBUTION STRUCTURE. WE URGE  
THAT THIS SUBJECT BE GIVEN MORE SCRUTINY BY P/DH.

8. ON THE GOOD NEWS SIDE OF THE LEDGER, HQAGLHQ AND  
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REVISED  
EXCISION

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R 231137Z FEB 87  
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TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 5981  
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3728  
RUSBPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 7809  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 04151

USIA

FOR P/DH. INFO NEA. P/G  
STATE FOR NEA/PAB. NEA - PLEASE PASS TO AMB. DUNBAR  
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E.O. 12356: OADR  
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REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 3691 (B) USIA 10024  
MILLS REPORT THAT THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE FOUND AN  
EXCELLENT CANDIDATE TO BE BU'S MAN ON THE GROUND IN  
PESHAWAR AFTER THE TRAINING PROGRAM ENDS. THIS IS  
FREE LANCE FILM MAKER STEPHEN OLSSON WHOSE  
"AFGHANISTAN: THE FIGHT FOR A WAY OF LIFE" WAS  
RECENTLY SHOWN ON PBS AND GENERATED GOOD REVIEWS.  
OLSSON IS CURRENTLY IN PAKISTAN AND APPEARS TO BE  
BOTH AVAILABLE AND INTERESTED.

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